

Connecting With God's Spirit

Children's Chapel, St. Mark's Palo Alto | June 6, 2021
Supplemental materials for https://youtu.be/YZwyk_dmyj0

Lectionary Reading:

Mark 3:20-35 The crowd came together again, so that Jesus and his disciples could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

"Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" — for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you." And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

Theological Background

Jesus gives us a simple but often difficult way to check in about whether something that seems strange or confusing might be aligned with God's spirit: Does it align with what we know about God? Is someone doing "the will of God" as we can perceive it?

It's very easy to get caught up in our own thoughts, feelings, and desires, and be confused or unable to figure out where God is in all of this. We know that God's spirit dwells within us, but we also know that it's a spirit of love, grace, peace, wisdom, and joy. So what do we do when we're confused?

We can go to the source of the spirit, who is always accessible to us through quiet contemplation, prayer, and the simple act of desiring God's presence. Even if our thoughts, fears, and questions might not be direct reflections of God's will, God is always with us as we work through those experiences.

Go Deeper!

If you or your child connected positively with the guided breathing visual in today's video, there are plenty more out there! Check out this link:

<https://www.doyou.com/10-awesome-gifs-for-calm-breathing-59450/>

Or this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tOJZQhO_Uw

Have you ever heard someone claim that their actions were guided by God? Or have you heard someone attribute world events to God's will? What do you think of those claims? How do you determine for yourself whether something is "of God"?

It's no coincidence that our breath, which is a great way to connect with our spirituality and tune in to God's presence, is always in us. We need to breathe in order to live, but breathing is also very good for us. God designed our bodies, minds, and the world around us with lots of different pathways to God's presence. How many can you think of?

Examples: Eating tasty food, walking in nature, hugging other people

Do you or your child connect to worship experiences through music? Here are some songs about connecting with God's presence:

- Citizen Way - Evidence <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zotmQph6xEc>
- United Pursuit - Set A Fire <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpXd6-cT-cY>
- The Afters - Breathe In, Breathe Out https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4teuu_raEk